

Questions for school board candidates

1. What is your history with the school system/school board? Former student? Teacher/staff member? Parent of current or former student?

I am a former teacher, academic coach, assistant principal, teacher evaluator, and district administrator. I taught in WV in my hometown and in Roanoke City, VA, where I was honored to be chosen as the Roanoke City Teacher of the Year. I was further blessed to receive the honor of Runner – Up to VA State Teacher of the Year. When moving to Georgetown County I served as a teacher at Andrews Elementary School. Moving into administration at Georgetown County I held various posts including ADEPT (Evaluation of Teachers/Mentoring Teachers), professional development director, curriculum and instruction/federal programs executive director.

I have three grandchildren who attended and attend Waccamaw Schools. Samantha, a junior at Anderson University, Ben, a freshman at Waccamaw High School, and Jessica, a sixth grader at Waccamaw Intermediate School were and are part of the Georgetown County School family.

2. Are you familiar with the curriculum at each level? If so, what will you do to improve student progress and performance, graduation rate, college/career readiness? Does the curriculum address the technological needs for students to survive in a constantly changing world?

I am very familiar with curriculum as I supervised the curriculum and instruction in all grades. I will make certain that student performance is a priority. Continued growth will be assessed. As a school board member, I will closely monitor the budgeting process to make sure all expenditures address classroom instruction and teacher needs not additional administrative costs. Monies for professional development are critical in assuring the implementation of curriculum with best practices. Currently there is little or no monies provided by the local budget.

Auditing of all of the current programs used in the district needs to be conducted and presented to the school board in order to establish the effectiveness of the monies spent. This is critical as we move forward with limited funds. Understanding the effect each program has on student performance is important.

I strongly support early childhood (4K) for all students. There are gaps in learning which are critical to eradicate before they effect students' abilities to be successful.

Mathematics' instruction and additional support for teachers would be an area that I would clearly champion. Reading coaches have made a powerful difference in schools. The consideration of math and science coaches (lost to lack of monies in budgets) would be on my radar. Interventionists in reading/mathematics should be an integral part of elementary schools. South Carolina must recognize this profound need.

School Board support of partnerships with wrap around services needs to be continued and expanded. Healthy Learners, Miss Ruby's Kids, Village Group, Teach My People, and the Bunnelle Foundation are examples of current providers.

I am an advocate for foreign language to be added to the elementary and middle school curriculum. There is a requirement for students to be exposed in foreign languages in elementary/middle grades by the state. The school board needs to be a strong voice for state monies to be provided. Currently, there is no state funding.

While graduation rate is typically high in Georgetown County Schools, it is imperative that students are prepared to meet the challenges they face at the college, career, and military entrance levels. Foundations in core subject areas need to be strengthened for all students so they meet these requirements. Secondly, early exploration of career and technology fields must be introduced to students in middle school. Project Lead the Way has been a start for these courses, but not all students are part of these activities. There is a need for more of the current funds (state does not provide funds to meet its required allocation) to be spent for additional guidance counselors so that many conversations with parents and students can provide the array of opportunities that are available. These early experiences will elevate parents'/students' awareness as they choose their Individual Graduation Plan.

Waccamaw High School does not currently have an ROTC Program for its students and other career and technology opportunities that will enhance students' career paths. That must change. All of the other high schools have these additional programs. Additional Advanced Placement courses must creatively be added so that students have the availability to matriculate with a number of college credits should that be a path that is chosen.

Promotion of the Horry Georgetown Technical School programs, addition of a plethora of local business partnerships, availability of internships, and addition of course offerings will boost students' and parents' interest in these career and technical programs.

Technology changes hourly. Expanding and enhancing these skills compel the creation of strong partnerships with Horry Georgetown Technical College and additional courses in the high schools. Making sure that the students who leave the district have the necessary skills to advance depends in part on their soft skills. Continuing to stress these skills enforces how diligently administrators/teachers have high expectations in the classrooms. Policies the school board implement must hold high expectations for all employees and students.

Education excellence requires that all students who enter the district from 3K to high school graduation have a chance to reach their goals and dreams. I support mental health counselors in the schools. This addition assures the availability of necessary services our children need as they face ever increasing pressures. This is a crucial program for improving student performance.

At the forefront of all of these important positions, I am a strong advocate for safety and security for all employees, students, and parents/stakeholders. Ongoing training will enhance the current safe environment we seek to provide.

3. Teachers and students are, for the most part, still dependent on textbooks whether in hard copy or online. How and by whom are district textbooks selected? Teachers? Supervisors? Parents? How often are textbooks for each discipline adopted?

Textbooks are a resource that teachers have at their availability. The State College and Career Readiness Curriculum Standards at each subject/level are the required subject matter students are expected to know and be able to do. There is a plethora of resources via the internet which can assist with reaching these standards. Teachers must instruct students to evaluate sources for their reliability and validity of information. These resources must be validated to ensure they reach the level of learning required by each standard taught.

Textbooks are cycled on a six-year period of adoption, provided there is state funding available. In recent adoption years, funds were not provided. Textbooks are therefore used for longer periods of time. Policy in Georgetown County provides for stakeholders to have availability to peruse text books considered for adoption. They were set up in a location provided for public viewing. Teachers attend caravans in sections of the state to hear representatives present their products. Teacher representatives are chosen from each school site. Then samples were sent to each school for teacher viewing and evaluation. Teacher representative share the information with their school faculty. On a date determined by the school district each teacher is given an opportunity to cast a vote for their choice. The school board then votes for or against the chosen resource based upon the outcome of the teachers' selection.

4. Other than attending school board meetings, how active will you be in the education process? Attend school functions? Will you tour schools in order to detect facility needs? Talk with teachers? Students? Parents?

I will be an actively involved school board member. I feel it is imperative that as a board member, I am visible and available to all of the stakeholders. The attendance at school functions, plays, concerts, programs, and sports events is a critical part of this position. Support for administrators, teachers, students, and parents as well as the voices of community members will be important to me. Availability at extra-curricular activities and sporting events provides another avenue to support students and hear from parents.

Being in schools will be an integral part of seeing the heartbeat of instruction. Administrators/teachers will have a trusted, informed voice. Needs of educators and parents will be taken seriously.

5. Other than COVID-19, what is the most important issue facing our district and how will you address it?

Currently, I feel that achieving a balance between the limited budget and excellence in education for all children in Georgetown County is the most pressing issue facing our schools. Due to the extra demands put on the budget as a result of the current COVID pandemic, lack of the availability of state funds, and the need for more diversified programs for our students, we will face challenges as we move forward. Budget preparation will require a careful look at all resources, positions, programs, and student needs. Assessing learning needs and schools' safety/security needs will help prioritize funding options. Excellence in education must be defined as progress toward the goal of seeing each graduate have the skills/tools to be successful in their chosen pathway and be inspired to be a lifelong learner. We must look at the lack of available programs/resources currently in place to make this a reality.

Listening to school personnel, parents, and students will be one of the tools that will be most beneficial. Secondly, program audits by each school will provide information that will assure the board which programs are successful. Expanding the resources for mental health counselors and interventionists have already been defined by school administrators as current needs. These were evidenced by those presented to the current school board.

During the tenure of this term, it would be my desire to support magnet programs, enhanced career and technology programs, teacher and school staff incentives (pay and additional benefits), and additional course offerings to our school curriculum. Continued work with business partnerships will be a focus for my work as well as seeking technology expansion in our county.

6. What is your understanding of school Choice and do you support it?

School choice is the right of a parent/guardian to choose the setting in which their student is educated. There are many reasons parents make a choice for their child to attend school in a particular setting. Therefore, I feel that GCSD must offer a variety of choices to our parents. Currently we are offering a virtual setting and an in person setting. We offer the Montessori School as an alternative to the traditional educational program. Students are currently taking college courses from Horry Georgetown Technical College as part of the PACE program. They are able to earn transferrable college credits. I strongly support the addition of magnet programs and career and technology programs as other opportunities to maximize students' learning.

Parents choosing an alternative option to public education certainly know what is best for their children and families. I support their right to do so.

7. What is your understanding of School Funding?

South Carolina provides funding sources defined as per pupil allocations for each student enrolled in the district. Addition funds provided by the Education Improvement Act are provided for students in poverty and academic needs in the district and are distributed to schools based on the number of students who qualify. Additionally, Special Projects Monies which include funds from federal and state grants are those which supplement the budget. These targeted funds are allocated with specific

requirements for distribution. Other funds are generated by pupil activities funding and food services. These comprise the operating budget.

There is also the Capital Projects Budget which is used for school improvements, equipment, and technology. These are monies that must be used for those specific purchases. The Capital Projects Budget cannot fund such items as salaries, materials and resources, or operational outlays by the district.

The district must also have a 'Reserve' Budget which is held to operate schools should a disaster or emergency occur. This reserve is measured by number of operational days that it will support.

Currently, the district is at the closing years of the Bond Referendum. These monies were voted upon by the stakeholders for specific Capital Improvements in the district. Fiscal oversight has been the responsibility of the school board.

Prior to July 1st of each fiscal year, the school board holds a hearing for the items in the budget to be expended for the coming year. These include the operating budget, the capital projects budget, and the special projects funds. These are the anticipated expenditures for the year. It is the responsibility of the board to peruse the budget and approve the expected expenditures. The Associate Superintendent for Finance presents the budget along with the various department heads who are the responsible supervisors of each of the budget components.

Additional funding expenditures are required to be separately voted upon throughout the year by the school board.

The school board must effectively utilize the current level of funding so that these monies are effectively expended at our schools for classroom instruction, not for administration. This does NOT require a tax increase.

8. **Would you support teaching the Constitution? Why or Why not?**

Yes, I emphatically support teaching all of our students the Constitution and Bill of Rights. It is the cornerstone on which our nation's laws rest. Our history needs to be imparted without opinion.

Usually teachers utilize Constitution Day as a platform to begin the discussion; however, this current year school had just begun. It is important that this practice of teaching our children must not be overlooked.